

Altrincham CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106341
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	309102
Inspection date	8 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Jerry Sutton
Headteacher	Mr James Inglis
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Townfield Road Altrincham Cheshire WA14 4DS
Telephone number	0161 9287288
Fax number	0161 9125934

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of the school's target-setting, tracking and assessment systems; initiatives to raise the standards of boys' writing; and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; observations of the school at work; discussions with pupils and representatives of senior staff and the governing body; and a scrutiny of school documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than most primary schools. Very nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds and there are no pupils at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils come from the local community, which is socially and economically advantaged compared with most areas nationally, and some pupils come from further a field. The school has a Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Altrincham Church of England Primary School is an outstanding school which successfully combines high academic standards, a caring environment and lots of fun! The majority of parents are very happy with the school describing it as, 'welcoming and warm' and saying that, 'Teachers are lovely and very approachable.'

Children get off to a terrific start in the Foundation Stage and they continue to make outstanding progress in Key Stage 1 to reach exceptionally high standards at the end of Year 2. Progress continues to accelerate in Key Stage 2 and the excellent progress pupils make in Years 5 and 6 ensures that pupils consistently reach exceptionally high standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make exceptional progress because they are extremely well supported. Teaching assistants are particularly effective because they have very good relationships with pupils and enable pupils who find school work challenging to gain confidence.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers regularly provide very well thought-out resources that help pupils to learn extremely effectively. Their high expectations help to ensure that pupils' work is very well presented. Activities are very well matched to pupils' needs. An outstanding curriculum provides a very rich and varied range of opportunities that ensure that pupils have a great time at school and make excellent academic progress. Much of the learning is based on real experiences and the wonderful range of visits and visitors bring learning alive. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about the residential trips, particularly those that involve exciting outdoor activities, and can describe in detail how they have conquered their fears and emerged with much greater self-belief. Partnerships are used very well to enrich the range of opportunities available to pupils. For example, links with a wide range of musicians have helped to ensure that the school's provision for music is excellent.

Outstanding care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school, and their outstanding achievement and excellent personal development. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust. Close links with external agencies help to ensure that vulnerable pupils are carefully nurtured. Pupils say that, 'Teachers encourage you a lot.' Learning targets are known by pupils and help them to improve their work.

The schools' Christian ethos underpins pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils grow into mature thoughtful young people who are very willing to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. Their considerate behaviour is outstanding and their very positive attitudes are a significant factor in their excellent achievement. Pupils describe their teachers as, 'firm but fair'. As a result pupils feel extremely safe in school. They say, 'It feels like a family.' Pupils say that bullying is very rare. Above average attendance rates reflect pupil's exceptional enjoyment of school. Outstanding provision for personal, social and health education ensures that pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep healthy. Pupils make an outstanding contribution both to the school community and the wider community. The Year 6 playground committee has done an exceptional job in helping to develop the grounds of the school. Pupils are especially enthusiastic about the 'Compassion' project and eagerly raise funds for children and students in less privileged positions around the world. Especially good basic skills, combined with the pupils' extremely positive attitudes, result in them being exceptionally well prepared for future economic success.

Outstanding leadership from the headteacher, the senior leadership team and governors has continuously driven up standards while keeping a clear focus on pupils' personal development and providing outstanding care for all pupils. Astute self-evaluation has resulted in the school pinpointing where it needs to improve. For example, the school has worked hard to successfully accelerate progress in boys' writing by providing more activities that interest and enthuse them. They have also provided some very good role models for boys, including authors and poets. Data are used very well to check the progress of individual pupils. Occasionally it is not used as well to look at the big picture and to raise the school's aspirations even higher regarding the proportion of pupils who reach the higher Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, the capacity for further improvement is outstanding as exemplified by the year-on-year improvement on already high standards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage means that children really enjoy school, grow in confidence and make outstanding progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children are well cared for within a calm atmosphere. Excellent communication with parents helps them to support their children's learning at home. Most children enter the Nursery class with skills that are above national expectations: they are confident, articulate and get on well with others. They make exceptional progress because of outstanding teaching combined with an excellent curriculum. By the time they join Year 1 their standards far exceed national expectations in every area of learning. The curriculum is first-rate and comprehensively covers all areas of learning. Activities are carefully planned with children's interests in mind. For example, the current focus on seaside and holidays has evolved into a focus on transport and journeys because children talked about their holidays and flying in aeroplanes. All staff develop pupils' communication well and work exceptionally hard to extend children's thinking by asking challenging questions. Record keeping and assessment processes are meticulous and are used well to identify the next steps in learning. The Foundation Stage is extremely well managed and focus and vision has ensured that the school is well on the way to implementing the new requirements regarding the early years curriculum

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the process of setting targets more effectively in order to raise aspirations further and to ensure that even more pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Altrincham CofE (Aided) Primary School, Altrincham,
WA14 4DS

It was a delight and a privilege to inspect your school. I really enjoyed talking to you all and I listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a really super school! It is outstanding! It is clear that you have a brilliant time at school because of all the exciting things you have to do. It was good to hear that you know lots about keeping healthy and safe. I was very impressed by your outstanding behaviour. You have very good manners and make visitors very welcome indeed. You told me that your teachers look after you well and that they always try to help you. You also told me that your friends are also very helpful and supportive.

Your teachers work very hard indeed to make sure your school just gets better and better. Children in the Nursery class and Reception classes have a great time at school because of all the interesting things they have to do.

The standards you reach are much higher than those reached by pupils in most other schools. You make outstanding progress because of outstanding teaching. I really enjoyed looking at your writing and saw some wonderful work in Years 2 and 3. I also liked hearing the terrific singing, and I am sure Year 6's performance of Annie will be fantastic!

It was good to hear about the brilliant trips in Years 4, 5 and 6. The adventure holiday in Wales sounded fabulous and it was terrific to hear how some of you faced your personal challenges and had your confidence boosted by your experiences.

Managers at your school are doing a super job. They have worked very hard to make your school one of the very best. I have asked them to look at how they set targets in order to aim for even more pupils reaching the higher Level 5.

Thank you again for being such good company.